

Remarks

Claim 24 stands objected to over a typographical error. The Applicants have corrected the typographical error in accordance with the Examiner's helpful suggestion. Claims 38 and 46 have been amended to include subject matter from Claim 24.

Claims 24 – 32 and 38 – 39 stand rejected under 35 USC §103 over the hypothetical combination of Wolf with Ellis. The Applicants note with appreciation the Examiner's helpful comments concerning the hypothetical application of those publications against the claims. The Applicants nonetheless respectfully submit that one skilled in the art would not make the hypothetical combination, but in any event, that combination would result in a different methodology and a different apparatus from what the Applicants claim. Reasons are set forth below.

The rejection frankly acknowledges that Ellis fails to disclose that the local clocks are slave clocks being controlled by the master clock. The Applicants agree. The Applicants respectfully submit that Ellis discloses a system for converting NRZ formatted signals into RZ formatted signals. That system includes a plurality of monochrome transmitters, each of which has its own transmission length, a coupler that may be assimilated to a multiplexer and an optical gate that receives multiplexed NRZ formatted signals which then converts those signals into multiplexed RZ formatted signals. Also, it may be presumed that each of the monochrome transmitters includes an internal clock.

However, there are additional differences in Ellis with respect to the Applicants' solicited claims. Specifically, Ellis does not disclose a synchronization circuit comprising a master clock and a phase locked loop (PLL) that controls the clock of the transmitters and the clock of the optical gate.

The rejection turns to Wolf to cure the deficiency with respect to the failure of Ellis to disclose that the local clocks are slave clocks controlled by a master clock. Wolf discloses a synchronous digital communications system including a plurality of network elements or nodes. The network nodes are connected to each other by a plurality of optical channels via a cross-connect. A non-switched auxiliary optical channel is used for each pair of network nodes connected by the cross-connect to transmit the synchronization signals between the network nodes. Wolf also discloses a hierarchical structure (master-slave) for synchronizing the network nodes. In that structure, the network nodes of a first level receive a reference clock signal and are arranged to output derived clock signals to network nodes at the next level.


In other words, the Applicants respectfully submit that Ellis is different not only from the Applicants' solicited claims, but also quite different from Wolf. Accordingly, the Applicants respectfully submit that one skilled in the art would not combined Wolf with Ellis. This is because the hierarchical structure of Wolf applies to elements or nodes connected by a network. This is sharply contrasted to Ellis wherein the elements of the system are not elements of a network. The Applicants respectfully submit that these sharp differences would not cause one skilled in the art to modify the system of Ellis with the disclosure of Wolf. For this reason alone, the Applicants respectfully submit that the claims are not obvious over the combination of Wolf with Ellis.

However, there is more. The Applicants respectfully submit that the combination of Wolf with Ellis would actually lead to completely different processes and apparatus. That resulting system would be a system wherein the monochrome transmitters would be organized hierarchically. A master transmitter would receive a master clock signal and with output slave clock signals (or derived clock signals) to slave transmitters. However, the combination would

not result in a system wherein a synchronization circuit including a master clock and a phase locked loop would be used to control the clock of the transmitters and the clock of the optical gate. In other words, that resulting system would be different from the Applicants' solicited claims. This is yet another reason why the Applicants respectfully submit that the solicited claims are not obvious over Ellis in view of Wolf. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

In light of the foregoing, the Applicants respectfully submit that the entire Application is now in condition for allowance, which is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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